



## Guidelines for Grass Replacement Rebate

Effective September 1, 2014

### Residential Customers:

Up to \$2 per square foot (up to 2,400 square feet and \$4,800 per site, front, side and back yards)

### Commercial and Multi-Family Unit (over 4 units) Customers:

Up to \$2 per square foot (up to 30,000 square feet and \$60,000 per site)

All customers currently participating in the program, previously called "Sustainable Landscape-Turf Replacement" but have not yet completed their project as of September 1, 2014 will be eligible to receive the \$2/sq. ft. rebate.



Go to [SoCalWaterSmart.com](http://SoCalWaterSmart.com) to determine if you are also eligible to participate one time in the regional turf/grass replacement rebate for an additional **\$2/sq. ft.**

City of San Diego water customers are not eligible to participate in the San Diego County Water Authority's Turf Replacement Rebate Program.

### About Sustainable Landscaping and the Grass Replacement Rebate

Sustainable landscapes are intended to be in balance with the local climate and environment and designed to require few added resources, thereby reducing waste and minimizing air, water and soil pollution. Grass is one of the thirstiest plant materials used in our landscapes. The Grass Replacement Rebate Program is intended to encourage use of ornamental plant material that thrives with little to moderate amounts of water during the extended dry periods that characterize San Diego's semi-arid climate. The scaled use of grass, with emphasis on the use of water wise plant material, abundant mulch, efficient irrigation and reduced runoff are all components of sustainable landscaping.

The objective of the City of San Diego's Grass Replacement Rebate Program is to encourage a reduction in water use through the conversion of grass to water wise plant material, while maintaining a high level of living landscape to benefit the environment. A switch from grass and conventional, high precipitation rate sprinklers to water wise plant material and low precipitation rate irrigation systems can save up to 44 gallons of water annually for each square foot of landscape area converted.

### City of San Diego Grass Replacement Rebate Process

1. **Read and understand these** Grass Replacement Rebate Guidelines. Please read these requirements prior to submitting your application to the City of San Diego.
2. **Complete the** [RESIDENTIAL Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Application](#) or [COMMERCIAL Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Application](#) when you are ready to begin your project. You will get a

confirmation email or phone call with a project reference number from the City of San Diego Water Conservation Program confirming that your application was received. **This is not approval to begin your project.** If you do not get an email or phone reply from the City within 10 business days, please e-mail [waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov](mailto:waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov) or call 619-533-4126.

3. **Have a pre-site visit:** Once your application is deemed complete by the City, a scheduler will contact you to set up a pre-site visit (must occur before you begin your project). Qualification to participate in the rebate program will be determined at this site visit. If you qualify, you will be given a project start date. Project must be completed within 120 days of the pre-site visit.
4. **Submit Plant Coverage Worksheet:** Send completed [plant coverage worksheet](#) via email to [waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov](mailto:waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov) within 45 days of project start date.
5. **Have a post-site visit:** Once your project is complete, please send an email to [waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov](mailto:waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov) or call (619) 533-4126 to schedule a final visit and confirm the area qualified for a rebate.

## Program Parameters and Requirements

- For Residential Customers:
  - ✓ City of San Diego residential customers served by an individual water meter can receive a rebate for grass replacement.
  - ✓ Rebate amount - up to \$2 per square foot to replace grass with water wise landscape (up to 2,400 square feet and \$4,800 per site).
  - ✓ Multiple applications submitted over time for a property are acceptable, so long as total square footage of grass replacement that is rebated does not exceed 2,400 square feet.
  - ✓ Minimum conversion per application is 400 square feet. If less than 400 square feet, must be 100% of front yard or backyard grass area.
- For Commercial, Irrigation and Multi Family Customers:
  - ✓ City of San Diego customers served by a commercial, irrigation or multi-family water meter can receive a rebate for grass replacement. This includes HOAs.
  - ✓ Rebate amount - up to \$2 per square foot to replace grass with water wise landscape (up to 30,000 square feet and \$60,000 per site).
  - ✓ Multiple applications submitted over time for a site are acceptable, so long as total square footage of grass replacement that is rebated does not exceed 30,000 square feet.
  - ✓ Minimum conversion per application is 1,000 square feet.
- All projects must be completed within 120 days of City-designated start date.
- To be eligible for rebate, property must have or recently have had a recognizably established lawn. Brown or dead grass is acceptable (in response to the current drought in California). Please contact the Water Conservation Program at 619-533-4126 to review participation options if grass has already been removed.
- Replace grass with plants that are recognized as moderate, low, to very low water use type plants. The [WUCOLs reference guide](#) can be a useful resource to identify plant watering requirements.
- Ensure new plants will cover at least 25% of the project area once fully mature. All customers must submit a [plant coverage worksheet](#) via email to [waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov](mailto:waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov) within 45 days of project start date.
- Trees are encouraged, although do not count towards the 25% coverage requirement.

- Mulch must be spread at least 3 inches deep, except where groundcover, gravel or decomposed granite is used.
- One or more of the following changes or upgrades must be made to the existing irrigation system at the project site:
  - ✓ Conversion to a low precipitation rate irrigation system such as micro and drip irrigation systems that are rated in gallons per hour. By converting to micro irrigation your grass replacement project area may qualify for an additional micro irrigation rebate of up to \$0.30 per square foot. See [Micro Irrigation Rebate Guidelines](#) for more information.
  - ✓ Conversion to high efficiency nozzles and other high efficiency irrigation heads.
  - ✓ Capping and hand watering.
  - ✓ Keeping existing system and capping some heads as appropriate for new landscape.
  - ✓ Adjust automated irrigation controller watering schedule to accommodate the reduced watering needs of the new plant material.
- Pervious hardscape in which water can permeate is acceptable, such as decomposed granite and flagstone that is not mortared into place.
- Site changes made related to rebate program must comply with all applicable laws, codes, policies, covenants, conditions, and restrictions. This applies to parkway areas adjacent to streets.
- Applicant's water account must be in good standing and water wise landscape at project site must be maintained for a minimum of 5 years. Photos of the project site may be taken by City staff to illustrate transitions from high water using landscapes to attractive water wise landscapes.
- **Paid** receipts and/or **Paid** invoices must include transaction date(s) and payment method, and must be submitted to receive a rebate. Receipts must separate costs into the following categories:
  - ✓ labor costs (may include delivery charges and design fees)
  - ✓ materials cost (costs for tools, fences, lighting, walls are not eligible)
  - ✓ taxes, permit fees and tariffs.
- Estimated rebate shown on the on-line Application is based on information entered by the customer. Actual final rebate amount will be determined by supporting documents provided, cost of device or project, and available funding. Rebate will be the lower of the two: total eligible costs for the project or device or the stated maximum total dollar amount per customer rebate.
- Customer must agree to and sign the application agreement before rebate is issued. A pre-site visit by City of San Diego staff is required before work begins. A post-site visit is also required.
- Rebate check will be sent to the customer of record 6-8 weeks after post-site visit is successfully completed and the application and supporting documentation are deemed correct and complete by the City.
- Please consult with a tax advisor if you have questions regarding any potential tax implications of your rebate.

### What does not qualify for a grass replacement rebate

- Artificial turf or other turf grasses.
- Project areas that use recycled water
- Vegetable gardens
- Water features or fountains
- Project areas where new plant material has already been installed prior to gaining approval to participate in the Grass Replacement Rebate
- High water use plants as classified by [WUCOLs](#), the plant label, or other plant reference source.

- Exposed soil surfaces (exceptions made to accommodate specific garden design motifs)
- Impervious surfaces such as concrete or asphalt that does not allow water to permeate into the ground directly under that surface.
- Planting of invasive species. For a list of invasive species go to the [California Invasive Plant Council](#) website or the [San Diego County Invasive Ornamental Plant Guide](#).
- Expenses associated with fences, walls, tools, and lighting.
- Taxes or tariffs associated with purchase of rebate-related device/product or work performed.

If you have questions after reading these guidelines, please call 619-533-4126 or e-mail [waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov](mailto:waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov). Include your project reference number if you have one and your phone number.

Funding for a limited number of rebates is available through the City of San Diego Public Utilities and Transportation and Storm Water Departments and/or a State of California Integrated Regional Watershed Management grant and will be distributed on a first come, first served basis until exhausted. This program is subject to change without prior notification.

An additional \$2 per square foot turf/grass removal rebate may be available through the regional [SoCalWaterSmart Rebate Program](#). Unlike the City's grass rebate program, customers can participate only once in this rebate opportunity.